

CHAPTER 4

Feasibility

To be feasible as a new unit of the National Park System, an area must:

- Be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment, taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries and,
- Be capable of efficient administration by the NPS at a reasonable cost.

Regarding the issue of size and appropriate configuration, the discontinuity and loss of integrity caused by the demolition of the Homestead Works have diminished the overall setting, placing the multiple resources considered in the Homestead vicinity into a context that would be difficult for visitors to perceive and understand as a conventional NPS unit. The development of contemporary shopping and mixed-use development on the site of the former Homestead Works creates a discontinuity of land use between resources that is not characteristic of the typical national park setting. Additionally, the communities within which these resources are located have been and will be compelled to seek productive uses on the major tracts of land cleared when the Works were demolished as well as lands adjoining Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7. The consequence of this search for new development and taxable uses is likely to result in other significant new future development in relatively close proximity to key resource sites.

Exacerbating these intrusions onto the cultural scene, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is now in the process of detailed studies of a major toll highway to the immediate north of the Carrie Furnace 6 and 7 site. The combination of the noncontiguous sites and the uncertainty regarding ultimate nearby development between and adjacent to these sites does not fulfill

the conventional expectations regarding quality of setting for a NPS unit.

Regarding the issue of efficient administration by NPS at a reasonable cost, the scale and nature of the industrial artifacts at Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 will require considerable expenditures of funds for stabilization, preservation and interpretation. Estimates show that a minimum of \$15 million would be required for stabilization and rehabilitation of the Carrie Furnace 6 and 7 complex alone, not including site acquisition, interpretation or improvement. The long-term management and maintenance of this physical resource will require ongoing funding that is difficult to estimate. It is difficult to support NPS commitment to the resource and property management obligations of the collection of resources found at Homestead, given other system-wide cost and maintenance pressures.

For these reasons — quality and configuration of the resource, uncertainty regarding the protection of the resource setting over time, and significant improvement and operations cost exposure — this study concludes that establishment of a conventionally managed, federally owned and operated NPS unit in the Homestead vicinity is not feasible.

For reasons enumerated in Chapters 2 and 3, however, the study does find that the collection of resources in the Homestead vicinity have an important story to tell about labor and “Big Steel,” that these stories and resources are not represented in the National Park System, nor are they dealt with effectively by sites operated by other public or private entities. Accordingly, while this study finds that creation of a new unit of the National Park System is not warranted, it does recommend that other types of federal recognition be considered, including designation of an affiliated area of the National Park Service.